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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2019
TAGS: ENRG KGHG SENV UK
SUBJECT: UK PLANS TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY, WORKING ON FINAL STEPS

REF: SECSTATE 61286

Classified By: Acting Economic Minister Counselor Kathleen Doherty for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) In response to reftel demarche, Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Officials Terry Carrington and John Hoskyns told ESTHOFF on June 12 the UK plans to join the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), but has not yet announced this intention publicly. Carrington elaborated that Secretary of DECC Ed Miliband is "keen" to join IRENA and this decision has the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO's) approval, but HM Treasury (HMT) "has the final say." HMG's contribution to IRENA is expected to be 2.2 million GBP (\$3.6 million USD) annually and Carrington noted HMT must sign-off on this financial obligation. While HMT is not expected to oppose the decision, Carrington said technical or procedural questions could cause delays.

¶2. (C/NF) The UK shares the concerns of the USG that IRENA could duplicate work of other multilateral organizations. The UK Government prefers IRENA focus on deployment of specific projects instead. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has already lobbied the UK to be picked as the headquarters for IRENA. Carrington noted the UK "may want to support their case," but does not have access to applications by other countries because it is not yet a member. Carrington is also aware of candidates for the Director General (DG) position, but has not seen these documents either. The UK will not make a decision on the headquarters location or on a candidate for DG until HMT approves the UK's membership in IRENA. If this occurs prior to the June 28-30 Preparatory Meeting, DECC's Director of the International Directorate Graham White would lead the UK delegation, with Carrington and Hoskyns as part of the delegation. If the UK's membership is not approved by June, Carrington said he and Hoskyns would attend the June preparatory meeting as observers.

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